

Dodd Seeking To Amend Suit

Moves to Withdraw 10 of 14 Charges

By ROBERT WALTERS
Star Staff Writer

Attorneys for Sen. Thomas J. Dodd, D-Conn., today moved to drop 10 of the 14 charges contained in a libel suit Dodd filed against newspaper columnists Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson.

Dodd's lawyers also reduced their damage claim from \$5 million to \$2 million, waived their right to a jury trial, asked for assignment of a single judge to the case and said they hoped the suit would be brought to trial by July.

The developments came in a series of legal papers filed in U.S. District Court here by John F. Sonnett and Donald Mulvihill, the attorneys who have represented Dodd since the initial suit was filed May 6.

Among the charges dropped by Dodd were charges that the columnists inaccurately reported the senator's two-year loan of a car from a Connecticut businessman and the senator's alleged transfer of campaign funds for personal use.

Remaining Allegations

The amended suit against the columnists contains one charge of conspiracy, two specific allegations of libel and a fourth count charging that the Pearson-Anderson columns, taken together, have damaged Dodd's reputation.

The move came as Dodd's attorneys were scheduled to take the first deposition in the case—a pretrial statement from James P. Boyd, the senator's former administrative assistant.

Sonnett estimated that the examination of Boyd would take about three days. The next scheduled deposition is to be taken from Dodd by attorneys for the columnists.

Elimination of the 10 earlier allegations would mean that Dodd cannot be questioned about them because the charges are no longer relevant to the case.

Pearson Statement

A statement released by Pearson's office said:

"It seems to us that the dropping of 10 significant counts is an indirect admission that Dodd did accept compensation from companies for which he did favors, and that he did profit from the proceeds of campaign dinners. We intend to prosecute the defense of this suit vigorously."

A statement released by Dodd's office, however, described the action as "measures that would insure trial at the earliest possible date."

In a motion for relief filed with the court, Sonnett said the action was taken to "concentrate this case on the fewest possible hard-core issues."

His motion said the new suit charged that Pearson and Anderson conspired to damage Dodd's reputation only in 1965 and 1966, while the initial suit alleged that the conspiracy began in 1958 and continued through this year.

Shift on Depositions

Sonnett had earlier said he wanted to take depositions from the two defendants, two secretaries in the building where Anderson works and five former employees of Dodd.

In his motion today, however, Sonnett said he was prepared to forego taking pretrial statements from at least two of the nine persons "and may be able to forego some others, depending on the truthfulness of those to be examined."

Sonnett also charged that the columnists were attempting to "delay and commercially exploit this case in every way possible."

He further charged that Pearson and Anderson were "determined to cast reflections not only on the plaintiff, but as well on this court, on the Federal Bureau of Investigation and on anyone else who refuses to dance to their tune."

"Protracted pretrial proceedings in this suit would subject Sen. Dodd to continued assault in Pearson's column," said a statement released by the senator's office.

The remaining allegations against the columnists are these:

1. They unlawfully engaged in

a conspiracy to "induce, aid and abet" Dodd's employees to remove documents from the senator's office and later published material from those allegedly stolen documents.

2. They inaccurately wrote that Dodd made a 1964 trip to West Germany to aid Julius Klein, a Chicago public relations man who is a registered foreign agent for West German interests.

Klein was the subject of extensive publicity in the West German press after he was called by a Senate Foreign Relations Committee probe of foreign agents in 1963.

The columnists said Dodd's trip was designed to help Klein "hang on to his clients" and that Dodd "accepted expensive gifts" from Klein in return for the assistance.

3. They inaccurately wrote that Dodd attempted to subvert U.S. foreign policy in the Congo in 1961 by "acting in cooperation with another foreign agent, Michael Struelens."

Struelens, chief of information services for the breakaway Province of Katanga, had offices in this country but was ordered by the federal government to leave the country in 1962.

4. Their columns, taken together, tend to cast doubt on Dodd's ability to serve as a senator and were made with

"malice and reckless disregard" for the truth. Pearson and Anderson have written more than 30 columns about Dodd since late January.

Earlier Allegations

Among the earlier allegations by the columnists contested in the initial libel suit but not included in the amended complaint are charges that Dodd:

1. Accepted a two-year loan of a car from a Connecticut contractor and later interceded with federal agencies to gain government contracts for the businessman.

2. Diverted for his personal use funds raised at a series of testimonial dinners and earmarked for campaign purposes, then failed to report the money on his federal income tax. Dodd claims the money represents tax-free gifts.

3. Accepted a "whopping \$500,000" legal fee from the Teamsters Union.

4. Misused his position as a senator to reward the Korean government and several firms and individuals who had given gifts to him.

The Senate Ethics Committee has announced its intention to hold public hearings on Dodd's relationship with Klein, but has not yet scheduled a date for the first session.